

endorsed the appointment of James Wolfensohn as Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement. Jim Wolfensohn will help the Israelis and Palestinians coordinate on non-military aspects of their disengagement, including disposition of assets and revitalization of the Palestinian economy.

To protect our present opportunity, President Bush has sent General William Ward to help the Palestinians reform their security services. General Ward is also coordinating all international security assistance to the Palestinians, including training and equipment.

To expand our present opportunity, the United States has greatly increased our financial assistance to the Palestinian people. We are pledging \$350 million to help the Palestinians build the free institutions of their democratic state. This is an unprecedented contribution to the future of peace and freedom in the Middle East.

Yes, this past year has brought forth a dramatic shift in the political landscape of the Middle East. But this moment of transformation is very fragile and it still has committed enemies, particularly the Government of Iran, which is the world's leading sponsor of terrorism.

The United States has focused the world's attention on Iran's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. And along with our allies, we are working to gain full disclosure of Iran's efforts to obtain nuclear weapons. The world must not tolerate any Iranian attempt to develop a nuclear weapon. Nor can it tolerate Iran's efforts to subvert democratic governments through terrorism.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Middle East is changing and even the unelected leaders in Tehran must recognize this fact. They must know that the energy of reform that is building all around them will one day inspire Iran's citizens to demand their liberty and their rights. The United States stands with the people of Iran.

President Bush has declared that advancing the cause of freedom is the calling of our time and in the broader Middle East, his policies are expanding the scope of what many thought possible. With our support, the people of the region are demonstrating that all great human achievement begins with free individuals who do not accept that the reality of today must also be the reality of tomorrow. Of course, there will always be cynics and skeptics who hold the misguided belief that if they can not see their goal, then it cannot be possible. They will try to elevate their cynicism by calling it realism and they will criticize all who echo the stirring words of Theodore Hertzl, "If you will it, it is no dream."

In 1776, cynics and skeptics could not see an independent America, so they doubted that it could be so. They saw only 13 colonies that could never hang together and would surely hang separately. But there were others who had a vision, a vision of the United States as a free and great nation, a democracy, and one day, a complete multiethnic society. With perseverance, the American people made that vision a reality. In 1948, cynics and skeptics could not see the promise of Israel, so they doubted it, said it could never be fulfilled. They saw only a wounded and wandering people beset on all sides by hostile armies.

But there were those who had another vision, a vision of a Jewish state that would shelter its children, defend its sacred homeland, turn its desert soil green and reaffirm the principles of freedom and democracy. With courage, the Israeli people made that vision a reality.

Today, cynics and skeptics cannot see a democratic Middle East, so they doubt that it is a realistic goal. They focus only on the

despotism that has shaped the region's past and still defines much of its present. But ladies and gentlemen, make no mistake, freedom is on the march in Afghanistan and Iraq and in Lebanon and in Georgia and Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan and in the Palestinian territories.

Yes, it is hard and progress is uneven. There are violent men who will stop at nothing to prevent democracy's rise. Yet people all across the Middle East today are talking and demonstrating and sharing their vision for a democratic future. Many have given their very lives to this noble purpose.

The United States and Israel must defend the aspirations of all people who long to be free. And with our unwavering support, we can help to make the promise of democracy a reality for the entire region. Thank you very much.

NORTH SAN DIEGO COUNTY AREA WATER RECYCLING PROJECT

HON. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 24, 2005

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I am introducing legislation today that will authorize the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to continue to participate in the construction of the North San Diego County Area Water Recycling Project which also includes, as a new component, Phase II of the Olivenhain Water Treatment Plant. This project is very important in the overall water supply plan in my Congressional District and I am proud to offer this legislation that will assist in its further development.

The North San Diego County Water Recycling Project is a regional cooperative effort by the San Elijo Joint Powers Authority, the Leucadia County Water District, the City of Carlsbad and the Olivenhain Municipal Water District. When completed, the project will add up to 5 billion gallons annually to the San Diego region's local water supply. With years of drought, exploding growth rates and California's reduced intake of Colorado River water, this recycled water has become vital to the region and it is extremely important that the project is completed to its full potential.

In addition to the benefits to the San Diego County region, numerous federal objectives are advanced through the development of the North County Water Recycling Project. The project will directly reduce the surrounding region's demand for imported water from the environmentally sensitive California Bay/Delta and will help California live within its 4.4 million acre-feet allocation of water from the Colorado River. The project will also reduce the amount of effluent discharged into coastal waters and advance D.S./Mexico border environmental initiatives.

The legislation I offer today will increase the overall authorization ceiling for this project from \$20 million to \$35 million within the Bureau of Reclamation's Title XVI program. It is important to note that the majority of the funds necessary to construct this project are coming from local sources which represent a heavy financial burden on local agencies. Federal participation will help make this innovative water supply project a reality.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that this legislation be given prompt consideration.

HONORING MASTER SERGEANT
JOSE M. LOPEZ

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 24, 2005

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor a true American hero even though that title is far too often overused. Master Sergeant Jose M. Lopez of San Antonio passed away on May 16th of this year at the age of 94 which in and of itself is remarkable but even more so when one learns of this amazing man's story. Sgt. Lopez was the nation's oldest living Hispanic Medal of Honor winner for his valor during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. Sgt. Lopez represents the best of us and stands as a shining example of selflessness and sacrifice.

Perhaps it should not be a surprise Sgt. Lopez distinguished himself in battle since he often told one of his granddaughters, June Pedraza, "Fear is the one thing that will hold you back in life." Living that credo time and again throughout his life, Sgt. Lopez faced and overcame seemingly insurmountable odds. Born in Mexico in 1910, Sgt. Lopez's mother died when he was 8 leaving him an orphan since he never met his father. He then worked a series of hardscrabble jobs and eventually made his way to the Rio Grande Valley where a family took pity on him and let him sleep in their shed. Later, he rode trains across America and in Atlanta, a bigger man antagonized Sgt. Lopez until he fought and thoroughly whipped his larger opponent. Coincidentally, a boxing manager happened to see the incident unfold and realized potential even though it was packaged in a 5'5", 130 lb. frame and began training Sgt. Lopez. Rechristened Kid Mendoza, he went on to a professional record of 52 wins and 3 losses and later recounted meeting Babe Ruth as the highlight of his career.

In 1936, Sgt. Lopez joined the U.S. Merchant Marines and later worked a number of other maritime jobs. Once, he found himself adrift on a cargo ship without food except for bananas. After the start of World War II, Sgt. Lopez enlisted in the Army and was among the troops who hit the beaches at Normandy a day after D-Day commenced. Sgt. Lopez was wounded as a bullet nicked his hip and as he told Bill Moyers in 1990 for a PBS documentary "I was really very, very afraid. I wanted to cry, and we saw other people laying wounded and screaming and everything, and there's nothing you could do. We could see them groaning in the water, and we had to keep walking." And, he kept going despite his fears until he found himself at another of World War II's turning points, the Battle of the Bulge.

On December 17th, 1944 shortly after the sun rose, Sgt. Lopez and his troops in Company K were outside Krinkelt, Belgium when the Germans launched their last-ditch offensive which came to be known as the Battle of the Bulge. Patrolling in advance of Company K, Sgt. Lopez heard a tank which he assumed was Allied since a soldier hundreds of yards away failed to alert him otherwise. Carrying a Browning machine gun, he jumped into a shallow hole when he realized the tank was a German Tiger and the troops following it were German. Concerned for his men, he opened